

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player using at least one input device;
- (b) presenting a play of a main game including randomly generating and causing at least one display device to display at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of said play of the main game comprising comparing said main game hand to a set of different predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if said main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands, awarding said player a winning amount and determining if said winning hand corresponds to any corresponding one of a plurality of different predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating a value greater than zero with the corresponding bonus category;
- (e) if a bonus condition occurs, after determining said outcome of said play of the main game, enabling the player to make an input using the at least one input device to cause a play of a bonus event if a bonus condition occurs regardless of whether said main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands, the bonus condition occurring when a designated number of values is associated with a designated number of the predetermined bonus categories, the designated number of values being at least one, and the designated number of the predetermined bonus categories being at least one;
- (f) repeating (a) through (e) until receiving said input from the player to causes the play of the bonus event; and
- (g) if said input from the player to causes the play of the bonus event is received, after receiving said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event, causing

the at least one display device to display the play of the bonus event, said play of said bonus event comprising randomly selecting at least one of the bonus categories after receiving said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event, said random selection of at least one of the bonus categories being in addition to and independent of any previously displayed play of the main game, and if any value is associated with the at least one selected bonus category, awarding a bonus win according to said associated value.

Claim 2 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said main game comprises a game of video poker and said predetermined winning hands comprise poker hands.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said predetermined bonus categories comprise one or more of said predetermined winning hands.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 1 which includes automatically causing the at least one display device to display said play of the bonus event once at least one value is associated with each of said predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including multiplying said bonus win by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 5 wherein said multiplier comprises a sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 7 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 5 including the step of awarding a progressive award in the event said score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 8 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 5 including the step of awarding a progressive award if said score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including permitting play of said main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if said wager is of a second amount which exceeds said first amount.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including the step of funding said bonus win from a portion of said wager.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player using at least one input device;
- (b) displaying a play of a main game, said play of the main game including randomly generating and causing at least one display device to display at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of the play of the main game including comparing the main game hand to a set of different predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if the main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands:
 - (i) awarding the player a winning amount, and
 - (ii) determining if the winning hand corresponds to any corresponding one of a plurality of different predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating one of a plurality of award values greater than zero with the corresponding bonus category, wherein said bonus categories include at least one bonus category associated with an award value which represents a combination of all of the values associated with the remaining bonus categories;
- (e) if a bonus condition occurs, after determining said outcome of said play of the main game, enabling the player to make an input using the at least one input device to cause a play of a bonus event if a bonus condition occurs regardless of whether said main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands, the bonus condition occurring when a designated number of award values is associated with a designated number of the predetermined bonus categories, the designated number of award values being at least one, and the designated number of the predetermined bonus categories being at least one; and
- (f) repeating (a) through (e) until receiving said input from the player to causes the play of the bonus event; and
- (g) if said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event is received, after receiving said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event, causing the at least one display device to display the play of the bonus event, the play of the bonus event including:

(i) randomly selecting at least one of the bonus categories after receiving said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event, said random selection of at least one of the bonus categories being in addition to and independent of any previously displayed play of the main game, and

(ii) if any award value is associated with the at least one selected bonus category, awarding a bonus win according to said associated value.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, wherein the main game is a game of video poker and the predetermined winning hands are poker hands.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method of Claim 12, wherein the predetermined bonus categories include one or more of the predetermined winning hands.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes automatically causing the at least one display device to display said play of the bonus event once at least one award value is associated with each of the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes multiplying the bonus win by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of Claim 15, wherein the multiplier is the sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method of Claim 15, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method of Claim 15, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes permitting the player to play the main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if the wager is of a second amount which exceeds the first amount.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes funding the bonus win from a portion of the wager.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player using at least one input device;
- (b) presenting a play of a main game including randomly generating and causing at least one display device to display at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of said play of the main game comprising comparing said main game hand to a set of different predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if said main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands, awarding said player a winning amount and determining if said winning hand corresponds to any corresponding one of a plurality of different predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating a value greater than zero with the corresponding bonus category;
- (e) if a bonus condition occurs, after determining said outcome of said play of the main game, enabling the player to make an input using the at least one input device to cause a play of a bonus event if a bonus condition occurs regardless of whether said main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands, the bonus condition occurring when a designated number of values is associated with a designated number of the predetermined bonus categories, the designated number of values being at least one, and the designated number of the predetermined bonus categories being at least one;
- (f) repeating (a) through (e) until receiving said input from the player to causes the play of the bonus event or until at least one value is associated with each one of the predetermined bonus categories; and
- (g) if said input from the player to causes the play of the bonus event is received or if at least one value is associated with each one of the predetermined bonus categories, after receiving said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event or after at least one value is associated with each one of the predetermined bonus categories, causing the at least one display device to display the play of the bonus event, said play of said bonus event comprising randomly selecting at least one

of the bonus categories after receiving said input from the player to cause the play of the bonus event or after at least one value is associated with each one of the predetermined bonus categories, said random selection of at least one of the bonus categories being in addition to and independent of any previously displayed play of the main game, and if any value is associated with the at least one selected bonus category, awarding a bonus win according to said associated value.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes, after awarding the bonus win, deleting each of the values, if any, associated with the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, wherein the main game is a game of video poker and the predetermined winning hands are poker hands.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of Claim 23, wherein the predetermined bonus categories include one or more of the predetermined winning hands.

Claim 25 (cancelled).

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes multiplying the bonus win by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of Claim 26, wherein the multiplier is the sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of Claim 26, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method of Claim 26, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes permitting the player to play the main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if the wager is of a second amount which exceeds the first amount.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes funding the bonus win from a portion of the wager.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein each time a value is associated with any one of the predetermined bonus categories, a probability of awarding a bonus win as a result of the play of the bonus event increases.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein each time a value is associated with any one of the predetermined bonus categories, an average expected payout of the play of the bonus event increases.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, wherein each time one of the plurality of award values is associated with any one of the predetermined bonus categories, a probability of awarding a bonus win as a result of the play of the bonus event increases.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, wherein each time one of the plurality of award values is associated with any one of the predetermined bonus categories, an average expected payout of the play of the bonus event increases.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, wherein each time a value is associated with any one of the predetermined bonus categories, a probability of awarding a bonus win as a result of the play of the bonus event increases.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, wherein each time a value is associated with any one of the predetermined bonus categories, an average expected payout of the play of the bonus event increases.